

**CORRESPONDENCE  
FROM  
FEBRUARY 11, 2008  
COUNCIL MEETING**



# LINDA VISTA ~ ANNANDALE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 94364, Pasadena, California 91109

February 11, 2008

William Bogaard, Mayor  
Steve Haderlein, Vice Mayor  
Members of the City Council  
100 North Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, California 91109

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08 FEB 11 P 3:53  
CITY OF PASADENA

Dear Mayor Bogaard, Vice Mayor Haderlein, and Members of the Council:

Re: Formation Of the City Of Pasadena Annandale Canyon Open  
Space Benefit Assessment District  
Meeting Of February 11, 2008 Agenda Item Number: 5.B.2

I am writing to you today to advise you that the Linda Vista-Annandale Association (LVAA) supports the acquisition and preservation of the area known as Annandale Canyon for open space purposes. This area has a long history of use for hiking such open space experiences such as bird watching. It is our hope that the area can become officially open to the public for low impact uses and protection of the irreplaceable open space and wildlife corridors.

This position was approved by the Board several years ago and we have supported all the efforts that have been made to date to secure funding for the acquisition, including supporting the work with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to obtain the \$2.5 million grant awarded to the City.

Several members of the LVAA Board have been active in the recently formed Open Space Now group and have strongly supported efforts to create the Open Space Element of the City's General Plan so that our City will have a comprehensive master plan for managing the acquisition and preservation of our remaining open space lands.

Although we do not have a specific policy on how to best go about this acquisition process, it is obvious that there needs to be a balanced and equitable approach to establishing a benefit assessment district for this purpose to insure it is successful. The district formation before the Council today does not meet this test.

We urge you to return this matter to staff for further study, including development of a city-wide policy for open space land acquisition and a survey of the public to determine the threshold of financial support for the funding measure, as suggested in the analysis prepared by SCI Consulting Group for the Trust For Public Land.

Sincerely,

  
Sharon Yonashiro  
President

2/11/2008

5.B.2

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CITY OF PASADENA  
CITY OF PASADENA

08 FEB 11 P1:46

RECEIVED

February 11, 2008

The Honorable Mayor Bogaard  
Members of the City Council  
City Council of the City of Pasadena  
100 N. Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91109

**Subject:** February 11, 2008 City Council Agenda Item 5(b) (2):  
Annandale Canyon Assessment District

Dear Mayor Bogaard and Members of the City Council:

As a resident of the Central District, I am writing to you regarding the Annandale Canyon Assessment District item on Monday's Council Agenda. As I understand the issue, a pending development threatens to transform the Annandale Canyon from natural open space to 24 large homes, including extensive grading and infrastructure. This proposal has been pending for several years in spite of identified adverse environmental impacts, further negative consequences to global warming, the further loss of areas of natural beauty and contemplation, and the continuing loss of porous surface areas that capture storm run-off for rainwater recharge of the City's ground water basin. **In addition to significant environmental issues, the retention of this area as natural open space is necessary to the continuing value of Pasadena as a place. As such, this area is a natural treasure for ALL Pasadena residents; those living adjacent to it should not shoulder the cost of preserving it on behalf of the whole City.**

***It is clear that the current lack of the mandated Open Space Element of the General Plan is driving this ad hoc approach to protecting and conserving natural open space in our City.***

**The Land Value, the Grant and City Funds:** The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, recognizing the importance of this area to the environmental health of the City, has provided a grant of \$2.5 million toward the purchase price for the area (understood to be about \$7 million). A survey conducted by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's consultant, SCI Consulting Group (September 2006), concluded that the most effective way to raise these funds would be an allocation from City funds and funds raised from a **City-wide assessment district** which would include **other open space areas and funds for their long-term maintenance**. The consultant also advised that an assessment amount of about \$30 per year over 30 years per parcel would be an expected amount to be raised from an assessment district.

**City Staff Response:** I understand that the City proceeded to negotiate a purchase agreement for the understood-to-be \$7 million purchase price for the canyon, committing approximately \$1 million from City or other sources. City staff then informed property owners in the Annandale Canyon area that they would be responsible for raising the balance of the purchase price through an assessment district *solely* on their properties. The proposed assessments would range from about \$200 to about \$1,000, far in excess of the estimated \$30 per year that the consulted advised would likely be approved through an assessment district. The area owners asked for a City commitment that if they approved the district, it be automatically "rolled over" into any future City-wide district for open space and parkland, thereby reducing the ongoing

assessment burden. City staff made, but then later retracted, this commitment.

**Probable Consequences:** A failed strategy to purchase this area would jeopardize the Conservancy grant and similar grants in the future. It is also likely to create a higher level of distrust of the City by Pasadena residents, cause the developer to withdraw his offer to sell the property and jeopardize a City-wide assessment to purchase and maintain natural open space and park lands.

**Recommendations:** I recommend that the City Council remand this item to City staff for further study in conjunction with the development of City-wide comprehensive planning policies and implementation action program required as part of the state-mandated Open Space and Conservation Elements of the General Plan. The City Council-approved citizen-based task should be appointed with all due speed and the appropriate consultant(s) engaged to develop these mandated elements with broad-based citizen engagement and direct involvement. In order to protect the grant from the Conservancy, the City should consider a "bridge loan" to be repaid from a city-wide benefit assessment district, other grant funds or other creative financing approaches.

Respectfully submitted,



**Marsha V. Rood, FAICP**